

**Capstone Project - The Battle of
Neighborhoods
Report**

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The average American moves about eleven times in their lifetime. This brings us to the question: Do people move until they find a place to settle down where they truly feel happy, or do our wants and needs change over time, prompting us to eventually leave a town we once called home for a new area that will bring us satisfaction? Do we too often move to a new area without knowing exactly what we're getting into, forcing us to turn tail and run at the first sign of discomfort?

To minimize the chances of this happening, we should always do proper research when planning our next move in life. Consider the following factors when picking a new place to live so you don't end up wasting your valuable time and money making a move you'll end up regretting. Safety is a top concern when moving to a new area. If you don't feel safe in your own home, you're not going to be able to enjoy living there.

1.2 Problem

The crime statistics dataset of London found on Kaggle has crimes in each Boroughs of London from 2008 to 2016. The year 2016 being the latest we will be considering the data of that year which is actually old information as of now. The crime rates in each borough may have changed over time.

This project aims to select the safest borough in London based on the total crimes and explore the neighborhoods of that borough to find the 10 most common places in each neighborhood and finally cluster the neighborhoods.

1.3 Interest

Expats who are considering to relocate to London will be interested to identify the safest borough in London and explore its neighborhoods and common places around each neighborhood.

2. Data Acquisition and Cleaning

2.1 Data Acquisition

The data acquired for this project is a combination of data from three sources. The first data source of the project uses a [London crime data](#) that shows the crime per borough in London. The dataset contains the following columns:

- **Isao_code**: code for Lower Super Output Area in Greater London.
- **borough**: Common name for London borough.
- **major_category**: High level categorization of crime
- **minor_category**: Low level categorization of crime within major category.
- **value**: monthly reported count of categorical crime in given borough

- **year:** Year of reported counts, 2008-2016
- **month:** Month of reported counts, 1-12

The second source of data is scraped from a Wikipedia page that contains the [list of London boroughs](#). This page contains additional information about the boroughs, the following are the columns:

- **Borough:** The names of the 33 London boroughs.
- **Inner:** Categorizing the borough as an Inner London borough or an Outer London Borough.
- **Status:** Categorizing the borough as Royal, City or other borough.
- **Local authority:** The local authority assigned to the borough.
- **Political control:** The political party that control the borough.
- **Headquarters:** Headquarters of the Boroughs.
- **Area (sq mi):** Area of the borough in square miles.
- **Population (2013 est)[1]:** The population in the borough recorded during the year 2013.
- **Co-ordinates:** The latitude and longitude of the boroughs.
- **Nr. in map:** The number assigned to each borough to represent visually on a map.

The third data source is the [list of Neighborhoods in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames](#) as found on a Wikipedia page. This dataset is created from scratch using the list of neighborhood available on the site, the following are columns:

- **Neighborhood:** Name of the neighborhood in the Borough.
- **Borough:** Name of the Borough.
- **Latitude:** Latitude of the Borough.
- **Longitude:** Longitude of the Borough.

2.2 Data Cleaning

The data preparation for each of the three sources of data is done separately. From the London crime data, the crimes during the most recent year (2016) are only selected. The major categories of crime are pivoted to get the total crimes per the boroughs for each major category (see *fig 2.1*).

	Borough	Burglary	Criminal Damage	Drugs	Other Notifiable Offences	Robbery	Theft and Handling	Violence Against the Person	Total
0	Barking and Dagenham	1287	1949	919	378	534	5607	6067	16741
1	Barnet	3402	2183	906	499	464	9731	7499	24684
2	Bexley	1123	1673	646	294	209	4392	4503	12840
3	Brent	2631	2280	2096	536	919	9026	9205	26693
4	Bromley	2214	2202	728	417	369	7584	6650	20164

Fig 2.1 London crime data after preprocessing

The second data is scraped from a wikipedia page using the **Beautiful Soup** library in python. Using this library we can extract the data in the tabular format as shown in the website. After the web scraping, string manipulation is required to get the names of the

boroughs in the correct form (see *fig 2.2*). This is important because we will be merging the two datasets together using the Borough names.

	Borough	Inner	Status	Local authority	Political control	Headquarters	Area (sq mi)	Population (2013 est)[1]	Co-ordinates	Nr. in map
0	Barking and Dagenham	NaN	NaN	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council	Labour	Town Hall, 1 Town Square	13.93	194352	51°33'39"N 0°09'21"E / 51.5607°N 0.1557°E / ...	25
1	Barnet	NaN	NaN	Barnet London Borough Council	Conservative	North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South	33.49	369088	51°37'31"N 0°09'06"W / 51.6252°N 0.1517°W / ...	31
2	Bexley	NaN	NaN	Bexley London Borough Council	Conservative	Civic Offices, 2 Watling Street	23.38	236687	51°27'18"N 0°09'02"E / 51.4549°N 0.1505°E / ...	23
3	Brent	NaN	NaN	Brent London Borough Council	Labour	Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way	16.70	317264	51°33'32"N 0°16'54"W / 51.5588°N 0.2817°W / ...	12
4	Bromley	NaN	NaN	Bromley London Borough Council	Conservative	Civic Centre, Stockwell Close	57.97	317899	51°24'14"N 0°01'11"E / 51.4039°N 0.0198°E / ...	20

Fig 2.2 List of London Boroughs

The two datasets are merged on the Borough names to form a new dataset that combines the necessary information in one dataset (see *fig 2.3*). The purpose of this dataset is to visualize the crime rates in each borough and identify the borough with the least crimes recorded during the year 2016.

	Borough	Local authority	Political control	Headquarters	Area (sq mi)	Population (2013 est)[1]	Co-ordinates	Burglary	Criminal Damage	Drugs	Other Notifiable Offences	Robbery	Theft and Handling	Violence Against the Person	Total
0	Barking and Dagenham	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council	Labour	Town Hall, 1 Town Square	13.93	194352	51°33'39"N 0°09'21"E / 51.5607°N 0.1557°E / ...	1287	1949	919	378	534	5607	6067	16741
1	Barnet	Barnet London Borough Council	Conservative	North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South	33.49	369088	51°37'31"N 0°09'06"W / 51.6252°N 0.1517°W / ...	3402	2183	906	499	464	9731	7499	24684
2	Bexley	Bexley London Borough Council	Conservative	Civic Offices, 2 Watling Street	23.38	236687	51°27'18"N 0°09'02"E / 51.4549°N 0.1505°E / ...	1123	1673	646	294	209	4392	4503	12840
3	Brent	Brent London Borough Council	Labour	Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way	16.70	317264	51°33'32"N 0°16'54"W / 51.5588°N 0.2817°W / ...	2631	2280	2096	536	919	9026	9205	26693
4	Bromley	Bromley London Borough Council	Conservative	Civic Centre, Stockwell Close	57.97	317899	51°24'14"N 0°01'11"E / 51.4039°N 0.0198°E / ...	2214	2202	728	417	369	7584	6650	20164

Fig 2.3 London Borough Crime

After visualizing the crime in each borough we can find the borough with the lowest crime rate and hence tag that borough as the safest borough. The third source of data is acquired from the list of neighborhoods in the safest borough on wikipedia. This dataset is created from scratch, the pandas data frame is created with the names of the neighborhoods and the name of the borough with the latitude and longitude left blank (see *fig 2.4*).

	Neighborhood	Borough	Latitude	Longitude
0	Berrylands	Kingston upon Thames		
1	Canbury	Kingston upon Thames		
2	Chessington	Kingston upon Thames		
3	Coombe	Kingston upon Thames		
4	Hook	Kingston upon Thames		

Fig 2.4 Neighborhoods of the safest borough

The coordinates of the neighborhoods is be obtained using **Google Maps API geocoding** to get the final dataset (See *Fig 2.5*).

	Neighborhood	Borough	Latitude	Longitude
0	Berrylands	Kingston upon Thames	51.393781	-0.284802
1	Canbury	Kingston upon Thames	51.417499	-0.305553
2	Chessington	Kingston upon Thames	51.358336	-0.298622
3	Coombe	Kingston upon Thames	51.419450	-0.265398
4	Hook	Kingston upon Thames	51.367898	-0.307145

Fig 2.5 Neighborhoods of the safest borough

The new dataset is used to generate the 10 most common places for each neighborhood using the Foursquare API, finally using k means clustering algorithm to cluster similar neighborhoods together.

3. Methodology

3.1 Exploratory Data Analysis

3.1.1 Statistical summary of crimes

The describe function in python is used to get statistics of the London crime data, this returns the mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, 1st quartile (25%), 2nd quartile (50%), and the 3rd quartile (75%) for each of the major categories of crime (See *fig 3.1.1*).

	Burglary	Criminal Damage	Drugs	Other Notifiable Offences	Robbery	Theft and Handling	Violence Against the Person	Total
count	33.000000	33.000000	33.000000	33.000000	33.000000	33.000000	33.000000	33.000000
mean	2069.242424	1941.545455	1179.212121	479.060606	682.666667	8913.121212	7041.848485	22306.696970
std	737.448644	625.207070	586.406416	223.298698	441.425366	4620.565054	2513.601551	8828.228749
min	2.000000	2.000000	10.000000	6.000000	4.000000	129.000000	25.000000	178.000000
25%	1531.000000	1650.000000	743.000000	378.000000	377.000000	5919.000000	5936.000000	16903.000000
50%	2071.000000	1989.000000	1063.000000	490.000000	599.000000	8925.000000	7409.000000	22730.000000
75%	2631.000000	2351.000000	1617.000000	551.000000	936.000000	10789.000000	8832.000000	27174.000000
max	3402.000000	3219.000000	2738.000000	1305.000000	1822.000000	27520.000000	10834.000000	48330.000000

Fig 3.1.1 Statistical description of the London crimes

The count for each of the major categories of crime returns the value 33 which is the number of London boroughs. 'Theft and Handling' is the highest reported crime during the year 2016 followed by 'Violence against the person', 'Criminal damage'. The lowest recorded crimes are 'Drugs', 'Robbery' and 'Other Notifiable offenses'.

3.1.2 Boroughs with the highest crime rates

Comparing five boroughs with the highest crime rate during the year 2016 it is evident that Westminster has the highest crimes recorded followed by Lambeth, Southwark, Newham

and Tower Hamlets. Westminster has a significantly higher crime rate than the other 4 boroughs (see *fig 3.1.2*).

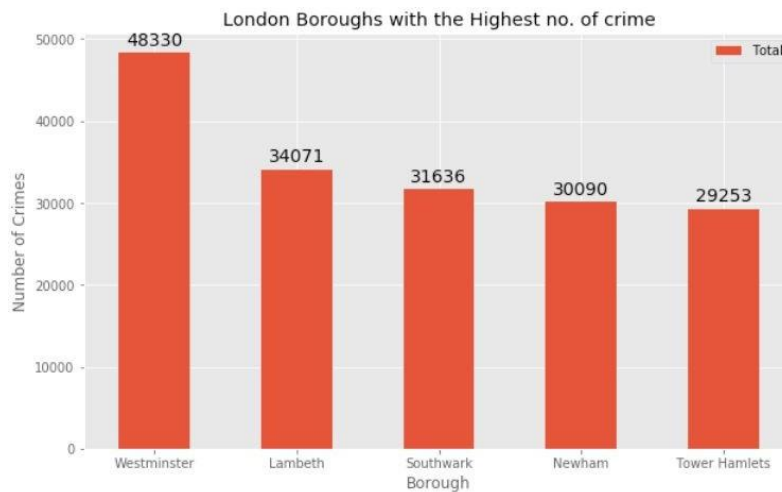


Fig 3.1.2 Boroughs with the highest crime rates

3.1.3 Boroughs with the lowest crime rates

Comparing five boroughs with the lowest crime rate during the year 2016, City of London has the lowest recorded crimes followed by Kingston upon Thames, Sutton, Richmond upon Thames and Merton (see *fig 3.1.3*).

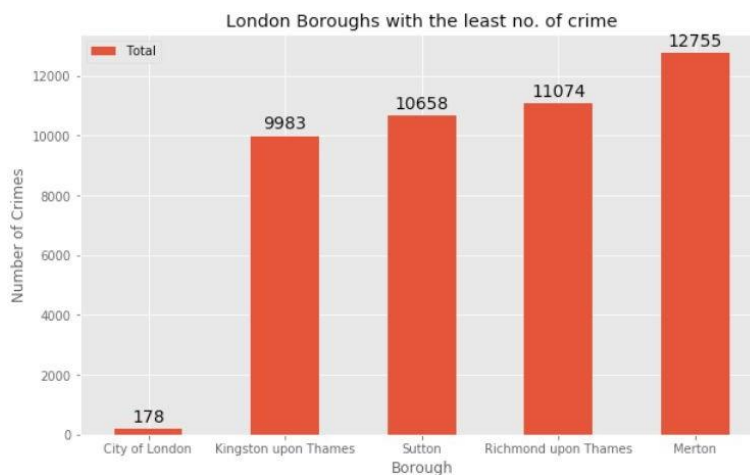


Fig 3.1.3 Boroughs with the lowest crime rates

City of London has a significantly lower crime rate because it is the 33rd principal division of Greater London but it is not a London borough. It has an area of 1.12 square miles and a population of 7000 as of 2013 which suggests that it is a small area (see *fig 3.1.3.1*). Hence we will consider the next borough with the lowest crime rate as the safest borough in London which is Kingston upon Thames.

	Borough	Total	Area (sq mi)	Population (2013 est)[1]
6	City of London	178	1.12	7000

Fig 3.1.3.1 City of London

3.1.4 Neighborhoods in Kingston upon Thames

There are 15 neighborhoods in the royal borough of Kingston upon Thames, they are visualised on a map using folium on python (see *fig 3.1.4*).



Fig 3.1.4 Neighborhoods in Kingston upon Thames

3.2 Modelling

Using the final dataset containing the neighborhoods in Kingston upon Thames along with the latitude and longitude, we can find all the places within a 500 meter radius of each neighborhood by connecting to the Foursquare API. This returns a json file containing all the places in each neighborhood which is converted to a pandas dataframe. This data frame contains all the places along with their coordinates and category (see *fig 3.2.1*).

	Neighborhood	Neighborhood Latitude	Neighborhood Longitude	Venue	Venue Latitude	Venue Longitude	Venue Category
0	Berrylands	51.393781	-0.284802	Surbiton Racket & Fitness Club	51.392676	-0.290224	Gym / Fitness Center
1	Berrylands	51.393781	-0.284802	Alexandra Park	51.394230	-0.281206	Park
2	Berrylands	51.393781	-0.284802	K2 Bus Stop	51.392302	-0.281534	Bus Stop
3	Berrylands	51.393781	-0.284802	Cafe Rosa	51.390175	-0.282490	Café
4	Canbury	51.417499	-0.305553	The Boater's Inn	51.418546	-0.305915	Pub

Fig 3.2.1 Venue details of each Neighborhood

One hot encoding is done on the places data. (One hot encoding is a process by which categorical variables are converted into a form that could be provided to ML algorithms to do a better job in prediction). The Places data is then grouped by the Neighborhood and the mean of the places are calculated, finally the 10 common places are calculated for each of the neighborhoods.

To help people find similar neighborhoods in the safest borough we will be clustering similar neighborhoods using K - means clustering which is a form of unsupervised machine learning algorithm that clusters data based on predefined cluster size. We will use a cluster size of 5 for this project that will cluster the 15 neighborhoods into 5 clusters. The reason to

conduct a K- means clustering is to cluster neighborhoods with similar places together so that people can shortlist the area of their interests based on the places/amenities around each neighborhood.

4. Results

After running the K-means clustering we can access each cluster created to see which neighborhoods were assigned to each of the five clusters. Looking into the neighborhoods in the first cluster (see fig 4.1)

	Neighborhood	Borough	Latitude	Longitude	Cluster Labels	1st Most Common Venue	2nd Most Common Venue	3rd Most Common Venue	4th Most Common Venue	5th Most Common Venue	6th Most Common Venue	7th Most Common Venue	8th Most Common Venue
1	Canbury	Kingston upon Thames	51.417499	-0.305553	0	Pub	Tennis Court	Shop & Service	Spa	Fish & Chips Shop	Supermarket	Indian Restaurant	Plaza
4	Hook	Kingston upon Thames	51.367898	-0.307145	0	Indian Restaurant	Bakery	Supermarket	Fish & Chips Shop	Women's Store	Fast Food Restaurant	Department Store	Dessert Shop
5	Kingston upon Thames	Kingston upon Thames	51.409627	-0.306262	0	Coffee Shop	Italian Restaurant	Clothing Store	Café	Pub	Bakery	Department Store	Sandwich Place
9	New Malden	Kingston upon Thames	51.405335	-0.263407	0	Gym	Bar	Korean Restaurant	Chinese Restaurant	Supermarket	Sushi Restaurant	Office	Indian Restaurant
10	Norbiton	Kingston upon Thames	51.409999	-0.287396	0	Platform	Food	Pub	Italian Restaurant	Indian Restaurant	Bagel Shop	Coffee Shop	Fried Chicken Joint
12	Seething Wells	Kingston upon Thames	51.392642	-0.314366	0	Indian Restaurant	Café	Pub	Coffee Shop	Harbor / Marina	Gym	Gym / Fitness Center	Hotel
13	Surbiton	Kingston upon Thames	51.393756	-0.303310	0	Coffee Shop	Pub	Pharmacy	Grocery Store	Italian Restaurant	Gastropub	Bistro	Post Office

Fig 4.1 Cluster 1

The cluster one is the biggest cluster with 7 of the 15 neighborhoods in the borough Kingston upon Thames. Upon closely examining these neighborhoods we can see that the most common places in these neighborhoods are Restaurants, Pubs, Cafe, Supermarkets, and stores.

Looking into the neighborhoods in the second, third and fifth clusters, we can see these clusters have only one neighborhood in each. This is because of the unique places in each of the neighborhoods, hence they couldn't be clustered into similar neighborhoods (see figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4).

	Neighborhood	Borough	Latitude	Longitude	Cluster Labels	1st Most Common Venue	2nd Most Common Venue	3rd Most Common Venue	4th Most Common Venue	5th Most Common Venue	6th Most Common Venue	7th Most Common Venue	8th Most Common Venue	9th Most Common Venue
2	Chessington	Kingston upon Thames	51.358336	-0.298622	1	Construction & Landscaping	Women's Store	Fast Food Restaurant	Department Store	Dessert Shop	Discount Store	Donut Shop	Dry Cleaner	Electronics Store

Fig 4.2 Cluster 2

The second cluster has two neighborhood which consists of Places such as Restaurants, Golf courses, and wine shops.

	Neighborhood	Borough	Latitude	Longitude	Cluster Labels	1st Most Common Venue	2nd Most Common Venue	3rd Most Common Venue	4th Most Common Venue	5th Most Common Venue	6th Most Common Venue	7th Most Common Venue	8th Most Common Venue	9th Most Common Venue
0	Berrylands	Kingston upon Thames	51.393781	-0.284802	2	Gym / Fitness Center	Park	Bus Stop	Deli / Bodega	Department Store	Dessert Shop	Discount Store	Donut Shop	Dry Cleaner
8	Motspur Park	Kingston upon Thames	51.390985	-0.248898	2	Gym	Park	Restaurant	Bus Stop	Soccer Field	Women's Store	Falafel Restaurant	Dessert Shop	Discount Store

Fig 4.3 Cluster 3

The third cluster has one neighborhood which consists of Places such as Train stations, Restaurants, and Furniture shops.

	Neighborhood	Borough	Latitude	Longitude	Cluster Labels	1st Most Common Venue	2nd Most Common Venue	3rd Most Common Venue	4th Most Common Venue	5th Most Common Venue	6th Most Common Venue	7th Most Common Venue	8th Most Common Venue	9th Most Common Venue
6	Kingston Vale	Kingston upon Thames	51.43185	-0.258138	4	Grocery Store	Bar	Italian Restaurant	Soccer Field	Garden Center	Furniture / Home Store	Fried Chicken Joint	French Restaurant	Department Store

The fourth cluster has two neighborhoods in it, these neighborhoods have common places such as Parks, Gym/Fitness centers, Bus Stops, Restaurants, Electronics Stores and Soccer fields etc.

	Neighborhood	Borough	Latitude	Longitude	Cluster Labels	1st Most Common Venue	2nd Most Common Venue	3rd Most Common Venue	4th Most Common Venue	5th Most Common Venue	6th Most Common Venue	7th Most Common Venue	8th Most Common Venue	9th Most Common Venue
7	Malden Rushett	Kingston upon Thames	51.341052	-0.319076	3	Grocery Store	Pub	Garden Center	Restaurant	Falafel Restaurant	Deli / Bodega	Department Store	Dessert Shop	Discount Store

Fig 4.4 Cluster 4

The fifth cluster has one neighborhood which consists of Places such as Grocery shops, Bars, Restaurants, Furniture shops, and Department stores. We will look into the neighborhoods in the fourth cluster (see fig 4.5).

	Neighborhood	Borough	Latitude	Longitude	Cluster Labels	1st Most Common Venue	2nd Most Common Venue	3rd Most Common Venue	4th Most Common Venue	5th Most Common Venue	6th Most Common Venue	7th Most Common Venue	8th Most Common Venue
6	Kingston Vale	Kingston upon Thames	51.431850	-0.258138	4	Grocery Store	Bar	Sandwich Place	Soccer Field	Farmers Market	Department Store	Dessert Shop	Discount Store
11	Old Malden	Kingston upon Thames	51.382484	-0.259090	4	Grocery Store	Construction & Landscaping	Train Station	Food	Women's Store	Farmers Market	Department Store	Dessert Shop
14	Tolworth	Kingston upon Thames	51.378876	-0.282860	4	Grocery Store	Pharmacy	Coffee Shop	Bowling Alley	Restaurant	Sandwich Place	Bus Stop	Soccer Field

Fig 4.5 Cluster 5

5. Discussion

The aim of this project is to help people who want to relocate to the safest borough in London, expats can choose the neighborhoods to which they want to relocate based on the most common places in it. For example if a person is looking for a neighborhood with good connectivity and public transportation we can see that Clusters 3 and 4 have Train stations and Bus stops as the most common places. If a person is looking for a neighborhood with stores and restaurants in a close proximity then the neighborhoods in the first cluster is suitable. For a family I feel that the neighborhoods in Cluster 4 are more suitable due to the common places in that cluster, these neighborhoods have common places such as Parks, Gym/Fitness centers, Bus Stops, Restaurants, Electronics Stores and Soccer fields which is ideal for a family. The choices of neighborhoods may vary from person to person.

6. Conclusion

This project helps a person get a better understanding of the neighborhoods with respect to the most common places in that neighborhood. It is always helpful to make use of technology to stay one step ahead i.e. finding out more about places before moving into a neighborhood. We have just taken safety as a primary concern to shortlist the safest borough of London. The future of this project includes taking other factors such as cost of living in the areas into consideration to shortlist the borough, such as filtering areas based on a predefined budget.